

A Medical Crisis, Up Close

Posted by Robert Carey

I've just returned from the IT&ME/Motivation Show at McCormick Place in Chicago, and as with any show of that size, there are many images that stick in one's mind. However, there's one image that I'd prefer to bury, but which will not leave me.

I saw an attendee carted away on a stretcher from the middle of that cavernous exhibit floor. He was a middle-aged man, probably not 60 years old. I could not tell you much more than that about him — other than that he was unconscious and his face was purple. He was clearly having some sort of coronary event. And considering the time it took for paramedics to reach him, lift him onto the stretcher, and whisk him to an ambulance, is there really a chance of him being alive today?

Yes, the majority of meetings have fewer than 200 attendees. But even with that number, think of how many people have diagnosed or undiagnosed heart trouble. Further, think of the stress placed on the body by traveling, hauling luggage, eating and sleeping poorly and at odd times, and other hardships. If you think a heart attack at your meeting is a remote possibility, you simply have your head in the sand.

Actually, it seems that many hotels have their heads in the sand, because most do not have more than one easy-to-use portable defibrillator on property. So if an attendee collapses in the conference wing, the staff may have to spend five or seven minutes locating the machine in the pool area, the fitness center, or wherever. And by then, it is too late for a defibrillator to work. After two to three minutes, the heart goes from an irregular beat that may be able to be corrected with the electric shock, to no beat at all whereby only vigorous CPR and mouth-to-mouth can keep the person alive.

In other words, planners should check that the hotel has a defibrillator for the conference wing.

someone else won't have to go through what happened the other day at McCormick Place, it is very much worth it.

Bed Bugs

Posted by April Torrissi

I was at my friend's wedding up in Cape Cod this past weekend and the hotel that the bride recommended for the bridesmaids was unfortunately infested with bedbugs. My friends and I were victims of these tiny blood-sucking critters eating away at us during the night. They crawled on our bodies and woke us up several times. Utterly disgusted and grossed out, we couldn't sleep all night, and in the morning we saw tiny red stains on the sheets. Luckily, the hotel reimbursed us after several complaints, but I would never want to deal with something like that again.

When I got home, I did a web search and found on msnbc.com an article entitled "Can't sleep? The bed bugs may be biting," on how common they have become in the hotel industry. I learned that even the best, five-star resorts have fallen victim to these pests, which live in mattresses, headboards and furniture. And the most frequent travelers are most likely to experience this unpleasantness, and even, unknowingly, carry bed bugs home in their luggage.

According to the article, in 2003 a businessman sued the Helmsley Park Lane Hotel in New York City after he and a companion allegedly suffered numerous bedbug bites while staying at the property. Helmsley Enterprises Inc., the owner of the hotel, settled the suit quietly in 2004.

Bedbug bites may be harmless, but they're gross and unpleasant. Make sure you ask the next hotel that you will be staying at if it has kept up with its pest control duties.

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Meeting News

October 24, 2005 | Volume 29, Number 10

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